

# Public attitudes to climate change and the impact of transport in 2011

This report summarises attitudes to climate change in relation to transport. The report covers the following issues:

- Attitudes to climate change and the perceived contribution from transport.
- Personal transport behaviour and willingness to change behaviour to limit climate change.
- Support for government policy options to help encourage such a change in behaviour.

This report is based on a survey module, which was included in the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) August 2011 Opinions Survey (formerly the Omnibus Survey). This module has also been included in Opinions/Omnibus Surveys in previous years (August 2006, April and August 2007, February and August 2008, August 2009 and August 2010).

## Survey design details

The **ONS Opinions (Omnibus) Survey** is a random probability survey of adults aged 16 and over living in private households in Great Britain. Adults are interviewed face to face in their homes. The response rate of 63% for the August 2011 survey resulted in a sample size of 1137. The response rates and resulting sample sizes for previous surveys in which the module was included are shown below:

	Response rate	Sample size
August 2006	67%	1,238
April 2007	62%	1,083
August 2007	64%	1,170
February 2008	60%	1,095
August 2008	60%	1,102
August 2009	54%	1,007
August 2010	58%	1,011
August 2011	63%	1,137

ONS Opinions/Omnibus survey data are weighted to reflect the region/age/gender distribution of Great Britain.

All figures in this report exclude those who refused to answer the questions on which the figure is based.

Differences over time or between groups, referred to in the text are statistically significant at the 5% level. (This means that if the difference didn't really exist in the population then the likelihood of observing such a large difference in the survey would be low – less than 5%).

In 2010 the survey module was changed substantially from previous years to focus less on attitudes to and perceptions of climate change and more on the potential to change people's behaviour to limit carbon emissions from personal travel. This is why for most of the questions in the 2011 module, only two years of data are available. Where single figures are used, these refer to the 2011 survey.

The questionnaire and detailed data tables can be found at:

[www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/climate-change-and-impact-of-transport-2011](http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/climate-change-and-impact-of-transport-2011)



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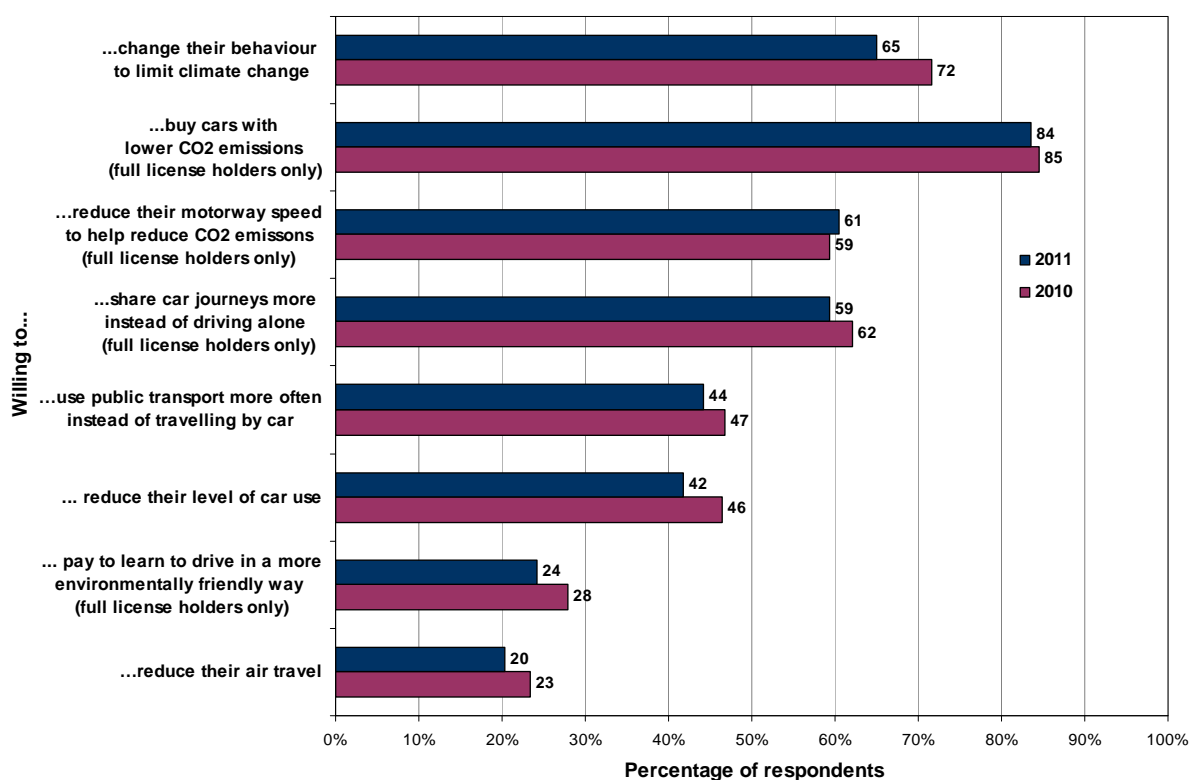
## Overview

### Overall trends

Levels of belief in and concern about climate change have been showing a general downward trend since the introduction of the *Transport and Climate Change* survey module in 2006 (see figure 1.1, page 8). The 2011 survey shows that concern about climate change is continuing to fall. The proportion of adults who associate road transport and aviation with climate change (without being prompted) has also been falling since 2006. Graduates appear to be more concerned about climate change and more willing to change their behaviour to limit climate change. The data for 2010 and 2011 suggests that the difference in attitudes between graduates and other adults may be widening (see figure 1.2, page 9).

The proportion of adults reporting that they are willing to change their behaviour to limit climate change has fallen from 77% in 2006 to 72% in 2010 and 65% in 2011. Looking at figure 0.1 below, it is not yet possible to discern whether or not this downward trend is reflected in the willingness of adults to make specific changes in their transport behaviour. There are only two years data on this and changes between 2010 and 2011 were too small to be statistically significant.

**Figure 0.1 Willingness to change transport behaviour to help limit climate change**

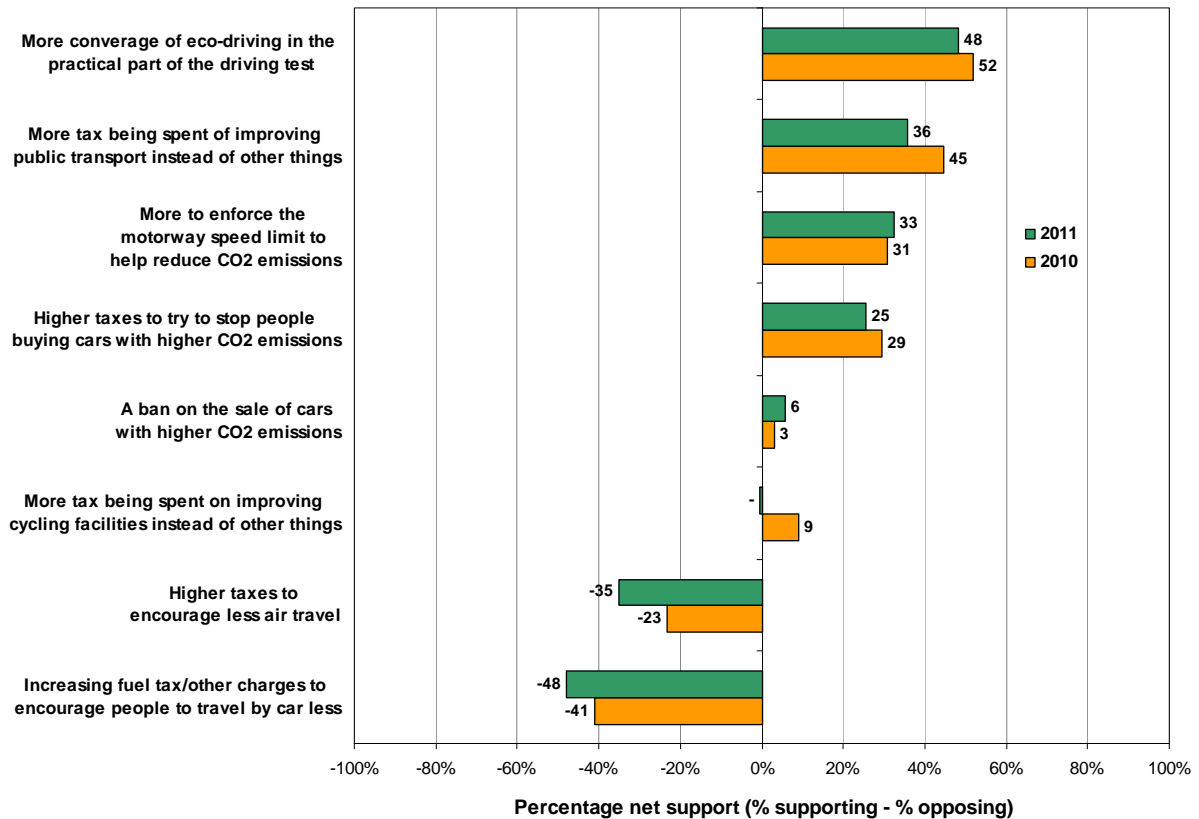


Source: Opinions Surveys August 2010, August 2011.  
Base numbers: 2010 = 996, 729, 729, 729, 995, 994, 730, 982 (top to bottom);  
2011 = 1125, 803, 797, 801, 1122, 1113, 801, 1094 (top to bottom).

The majority of drivers reported that they were willing to buy cars with lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and most drivers said that they were prepared to reduce their motorway speed to help reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (see figure 0.1 above). Less than half of adults reported that they were willing to reduce their car use and only a fifth were willing to reduce their air travel. In terms of attitudes to policy options to encourage behaviour change (see figure 0.2), there was strong support for 'pull' measures such as more coverage of environmentally friendly

driving in the practical part of the driving test and more investment in public transport. Most adults were opposed to the 'push' measures which would affect them financially: higher taxes to discourage car use and to discourage air travel.

**Figure 0.2 Support for passenger transport policy options to help limit climate change**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.  
 Base numbers: 2010 = 998, 997, 999, 996, 997, 996, 997, 999 (top to bottom);  
 2011 = 1121, 1122, 1122, 1121, 1122, 1106, 1115, 1122 (top to bottom).

### The potential to reduce car use

- In 2011, 42% of respondents said that they were willing to reduce their overall level of car use (see figure 0.1), while 35% were willing to do so and agreed that this was achievable within their lifestyle.
- Those who were more concerned about climate change were also more likely to be willing to reduce their car use. Among those who were 'very concerned' about climate change, 65% were willing to reduce their car use, falling to 24% among those who had little or no concern.
- Although 59% of drivers said they were willing to share car journeys more often rather than driving alone, only 36% were willing to do so and agreed that this was achievable within their lifestyle.
- Looking at willing to switch to other modes: 44% of respondents stated that they were willing to use public transport more often instead of travelling by car, with 27% willing to switch to cycling more often and 55% willing to switch to walking more often.

- Of the policy options asked about in the survey, higher taxes/other charges to encourage people to travel by car less was the only car related measure for which there was net opposition (48% net opposition), see figure 0.2.
- There was net support for more taxes being used to improve public transport (36% net support), which was maintained among those with little or no concern about climate change (11%), those who did not use public transport often (13% for those who used it less than once a year) and those who were very unwilling to use public transport more (4%).

### Environmentally friendly driving

- Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents agreed that the practical driving test should cover more on environmentally friendly driving. However only 24% of drivers (full license holders) were willing to pay to learn to drive in a more environmentally friendly way.
- Seven out of ten (69%) female drivers were willing to reduce their motorway speed compared to only half (53%) of male drivers. When asked if more should be done to enforce the motorway speed limit to help reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 60% of women agreed compared with only 47% for men.

### Vehicle purchasing

- Of the actions to help limit climate change asked in the survey, purchasing cars with lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions was the action for which respondents showed the greatest willingness; 84% of drivers (full license holders) said they were willing to do this (see figure 0.1).
- Around half (54%) of respondents supported higher taxes to try to stop people buying cars with high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with 28% opposing. When respondents were asked if the sale of such vehicles should be banned, opinions were more divided, with 40% supporting and 34% opposed a ban.
- Reported levels of knowledge about electric cars were generally low, with 48% of drivers knowing at least 'a little', 25% knowing 'hardly anything' and 27% knowing nothing.
- Excluding those who hadn't heard of electric cars, the main factors drivers said would discourage them from buying an electric car/van centred around, recharging (including *distance travelled before recharging required* (40%) and *too few public charging points* (30%)), costs (*cost to buy* (24%) and *cost to run/maintain* (11%)) and *a lack of knowledge about electric cars* (15%).

### The potential to reduce air travel

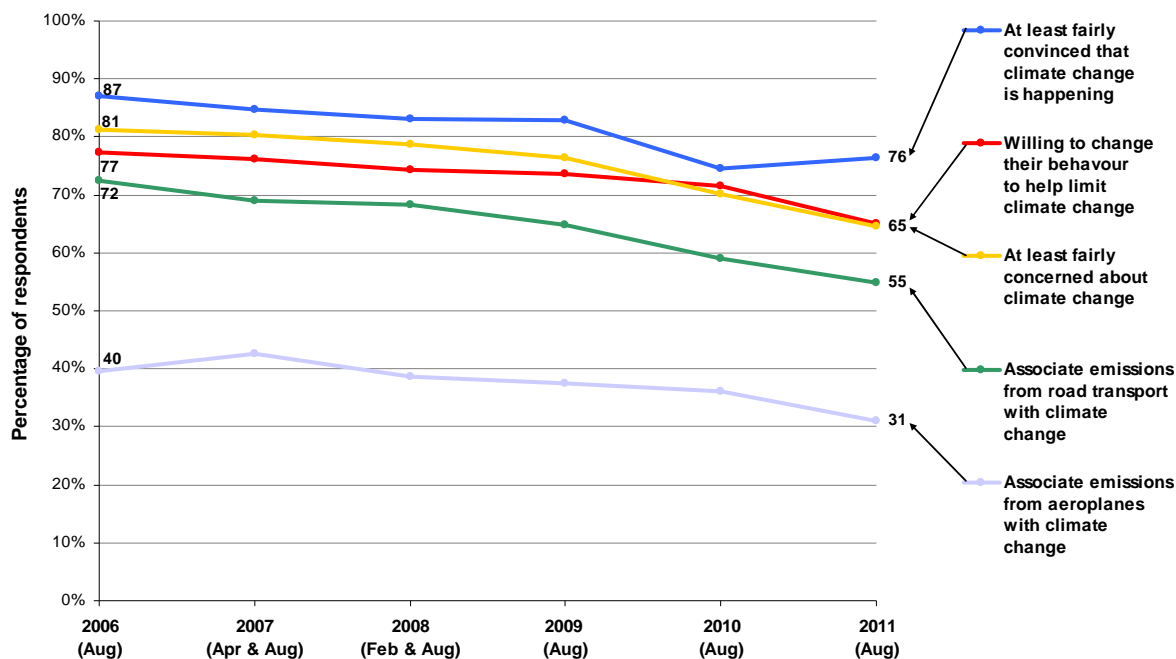
- Only a fifth (20%) of respondents said that they were willing to reduce the amount they travelled by plane, while over twice as many (46%) were unwilling to do so. Even among those who were very concerned about climate change only 28% were willing to reduce their air travel, while 40% were unwilling to do so.
- Of the government policy options asked about in the survey, higher taxes to encourage less air travel was one of only two policy options for which there was net opposition (35%), see figure 0.2.



# 1 Attitudes to climate change

This section looks at levels of belief in and concern about climate change, overall willingness to change behaviour to limit climate change and perceived causes of climate change. Figure 1.1 below summarises how attitudes to climate change and the perceived contribution from transport have changed over time.

**Figure 1.1 Changing attitudes climate change and the impact of transport, 2006 – 2011**



Source: Opinions/Omnibus Surveys – 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.  
 Base numbers: Convinced that climate change is happening? – 1219, 2244, 2192, 1005, 999, 1125;  
 Level of concern – 1237, 2245, 2192, 1005, 1000, 1125;  
 Willingness to change behaviour – 1218, 2244, 2191, 1005, 996, 1125;  
 Perceived contributors to climate change – 1155, 2156, 2090, 968, 999, 1124.

## Belief in and concern about climate change

1.1 **Levels of belief in and concern about climate change**, and willingness to change behaviour to limit climate change have all fallen since 2006 as shown in figure 1.1 (also see tables [att0201](#), [att0202](#), [att0203](#) and [att0204](#)).

- In 2011, 76% of respondents were at least ‘fairly convinced’ that the world’s climate is changing, falling significantly from 87% in 2006.
- The proportion of respondents who were at least ‘fairly concerned’ about climate change has fallen from 81% in 2006 and 70% in 2010 to 65% in 2011.
- In 2011, 65% of respondents were willing to change their behaviour to help limit climate change, down from 77% in 2006 and 72% in 2010.

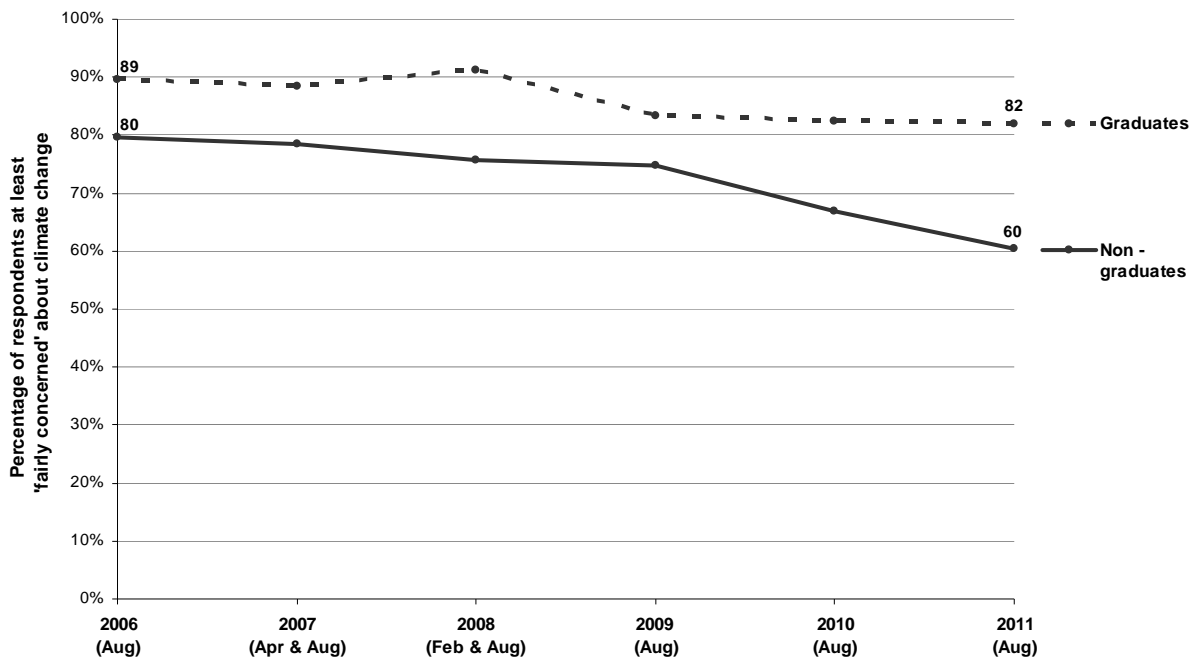
1.2 Those who were more concerned about climate change were more likely to be willing to change their behaviour to limit climate change. 82% of respondents who were at least fairly concerned about climate change were willing to change their behaviour to help limit climate change, compared to 34% for those with little or no concern.



1.3 Graduates were significantly more likely to be at least fairly concerned about climate change (82% compared to 60% for non-graduates). The data for the past two years indicate that this difference in attitudes between graduates and non-graduates may be widening (see figure 1.2 below).

- Between 2009 and 2011, the proportion of graduates who were at least fairly concerned about climate change remained at around 82-83%, while the proportion for non-graduates fell significantly from 75% to 60%.

**Figure 1.2 Concern about climate change by level of education, 2006 – 2011**



Source: Opinions/Omnibus Surveys – 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.

Base numbers: Graduates – 216; 386; 393; 196; 204, 196; Non-graduates – 1021, 1859, 1799, 809, 796, 926.

### The perceived contribution of transport to climate change

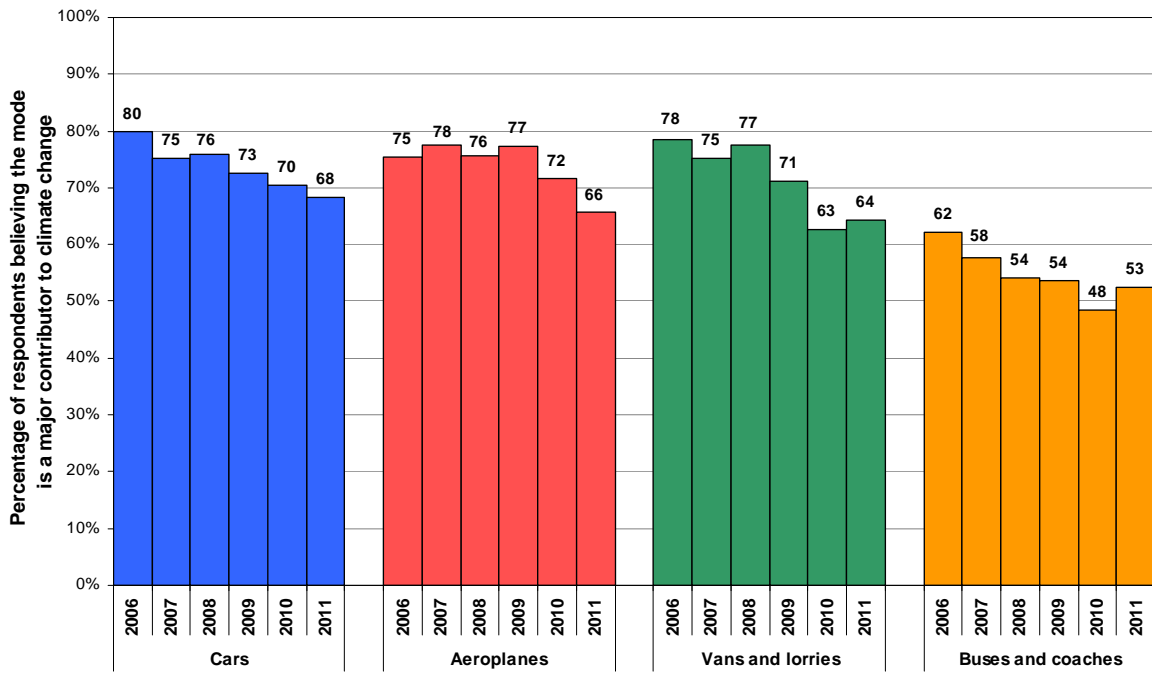
1.4 In each of the surveys since 2006, respondents were asked **what types of things they thought contributed to climate change** without being prompted with a list of responses (see figure 1.1 and table [att0205](#)).

- The proportion of respondents who mentioned emissions from road transport as a contributor to climate change has fallen significantly from 72% in 2006 to 55% in 2011.
- In 2011, 31% of respondents mentioned emissions from aeroplanes as a contributor to climate change, down significantly from 40% in 2006.

1.5 Respondents were also asked **which forms of transport they thought were major contributors to climate change**. The most common responses are shown in figure 1.3 below (also see table [att0206](#)).

- The proportion for each transport mode was lower in 2011 than in 2006.
- The proportion of respondents who considered cars to be a major contributor to climate change has fallen significantly, from 80% in 2006 to 68% in 2011.

**Figure 1.3 Modes of transport believed to be major contributors to climate change**



Source: Opinions/Opinions Surveys – 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.  
 Respondents could choose more than one response.  
 Base numbers: 1215; 2236; 2176; 999; 997, 1129.

1.6 Respondents were also asked **which form of transport they thought contributed most** to climate change (see table [att0206](#)). Cars (38%) and aeroplanes (29%) were the top two responses.

## 2 The potential for reducing car use

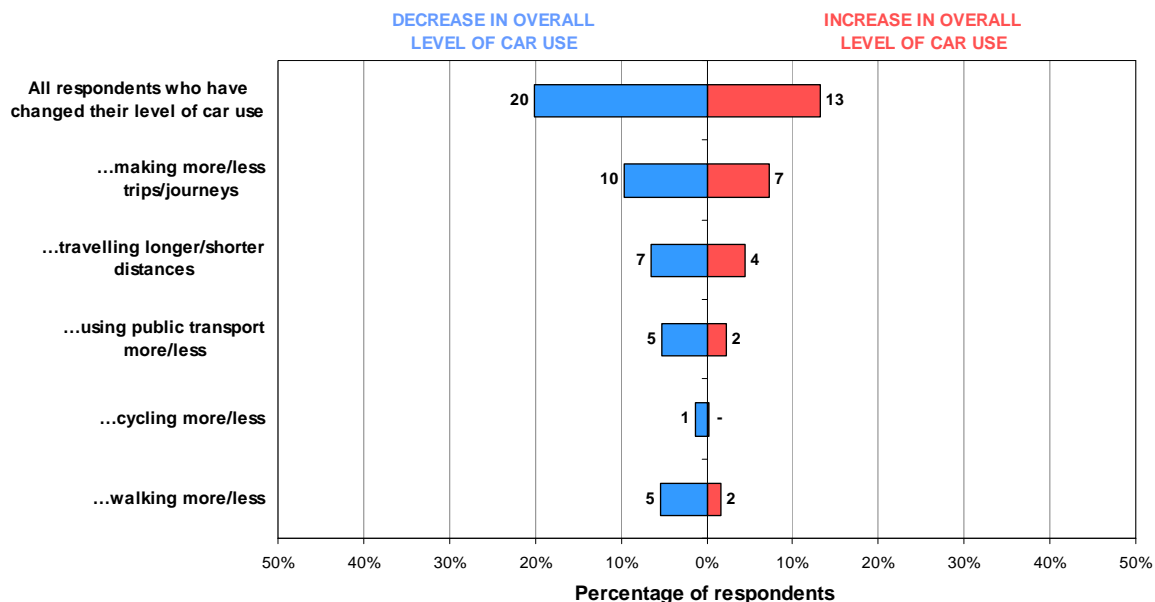
This section looks at the travel patterns of respondents, their willingness to take actions to reduce car use/car driving and support for government intervention.

### Levels of car use and changes over the past 12 months

- 2.1 Looking at **how frequently respondents travelled by car**, half (51%) of respondents travelled by car at least once a day, a fifth (19%) of respondents travelled by car less than once a day but at least 3 times a week, and 29% of respondents travelled by car twice a week or less (see table [att0207](#)).
- 2.2 How frequently respondents travelled by car appeared to be largely unrelated to how concerned they were about climate change, but appeared to bear some association with how much they earned:
- Among those earning less than £10,400, 60% travelled by car at least 3 times a week, rising to 80% among those who earned £16,400 or more.
- 2.3 Respondents were asked **whether or not their level of car use had changed over the past 12 months**. A fifth (20%) of respondents reported that their level of car use decreased over the past 12 months while 13% reported an increase. For 67% of respondents there had been no change (see table [att0208](#)).
- 2.4 Respondents who reported that there had been a change in their level of car use, were asked **what changes had occurred**. The results are summarised in figure 2.1 below.

**Figure 2.1 Changes in car use over the past 12 months**

Proportion of respondents who have increased/decreased their level of car use in the past 12 months at least in part through...  
(Respondents may have changed their level of car use in more than one way)



Source: Opinions Survey 2011.  
Base number: 1136.

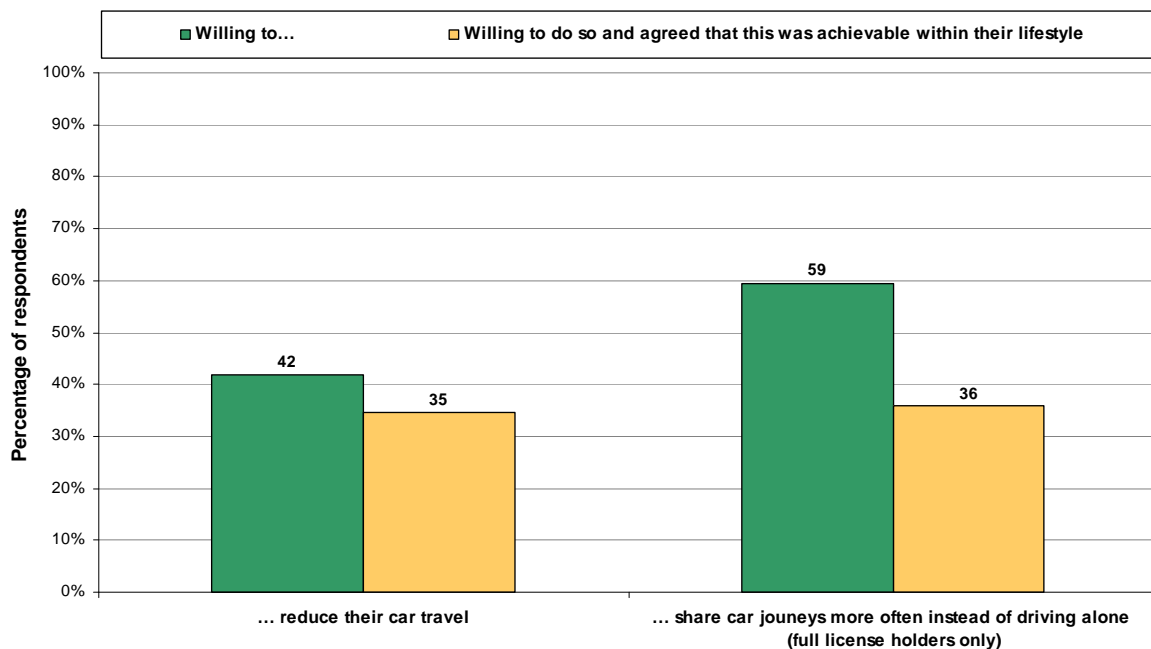
2.5 Respondents who had experienced a change in their level of car use over the past 12 months were asked **what the reasons were for this change**. They could provide multiple reasons.

- Among the respondents who had reduced their car use over the past 12 months the most common reasons provided were:
  - Cost of driving (40%)
  - Work related reasons, e.g. change in employment status/job/work pattern...(32%)
  - To improve health/wellbeing (17%)
  - Health problems (12%)
  - Moved house (10%)
  - Concerns about the environment (8%)
- Among the respondents who had increased their car use over the past 12 months, by far the most common reasons provided were 'work related reasons' (39%) and 'moved house' (19%).

### Willingness to reduce car use or share car journeys more often

- 2.6 The two possible ways in which car driving can decrease are:
- a decrease in car use - individuals travelling by car less, either as drivers or passengers (this could be through shorter trips or fewer trips)
  - drivers sharing car journeys more often rather than travelling alone
- As shown in figure 2.2, the proportion of drivers reporting that they were willing to share car journeys more often (59%) was higher than the proportion of all respondents who reported they were willing to reduce their car travel (42%). However, when looking at those who were willing to do so, and agreed that this was achievable within their lifestyle, the proportions were similar in both cases (35% and 36% respectively).

**Figure 2.2** Willingness to take actions to reduce car driving

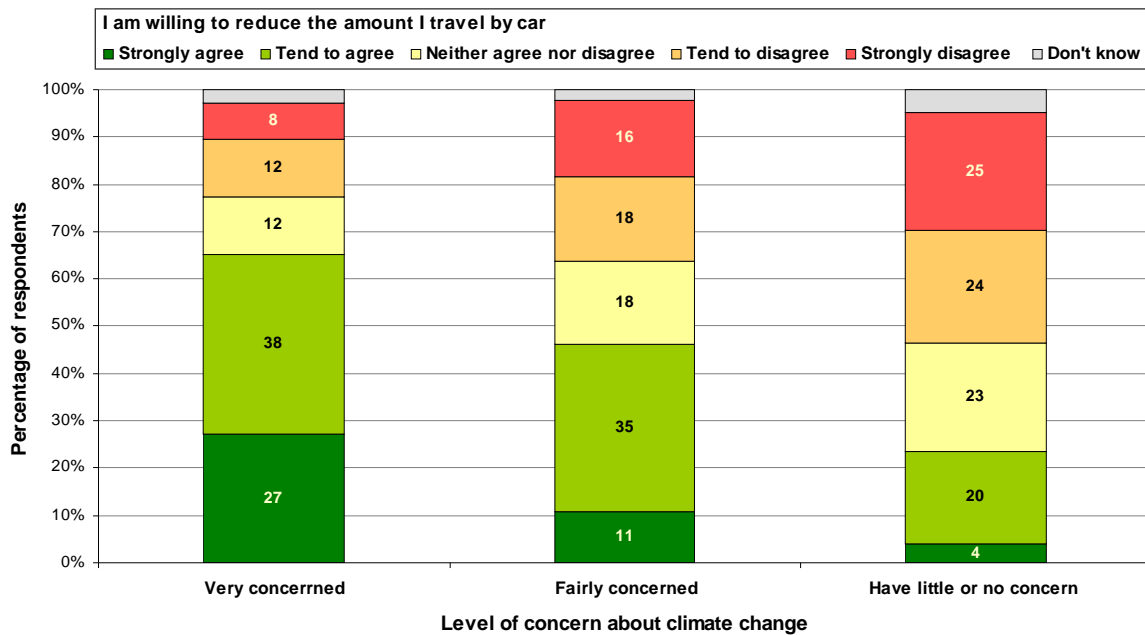


Source: Opinions Survey 2011.  
 Base numbers: reduce their car travel (all adults) = 1113; share car journeys (full license holders) = 797.

2.7 In 2011, 42% of respondents said that they were **willing to reduce the amount they travelled by car** while 36% were unwilling to do so (see table [att0209](#)).

- Among those who were very concerned about climate change 65% were willing to reduce their car use, falling to 24% among those who had little or no concern (see figure 2.3 below).
- Graduates were significantly more likely to be willing to reduce their car travel than other respondents (55% compared to 38%).

**Figure 2.3 Willingness to reduce car use by level of concern about climate change**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.  
Base numbers: 192, 532, 373.

2.8 Of those who were **willing to reduce their car use**, 29% reported that they **had reduced their car use in the last 12 months**, significantly higher than for all other respondents (14%).

2.9 In 2011, 59% of drivers said they were **willing to share car journeys more often instead of driving alone**, while 25% were unwilling (see table [att0211](#)).

- The proportion of drivers willing to share car journeys more often, decreases significantly with age, from 72% among the 17-34 year olds, falling to 47% among the 65 and over age group.
- Drivers who were graduates were significantly more likely to be willing to share car journeys more often, than other drivers (70% compared to 56%).

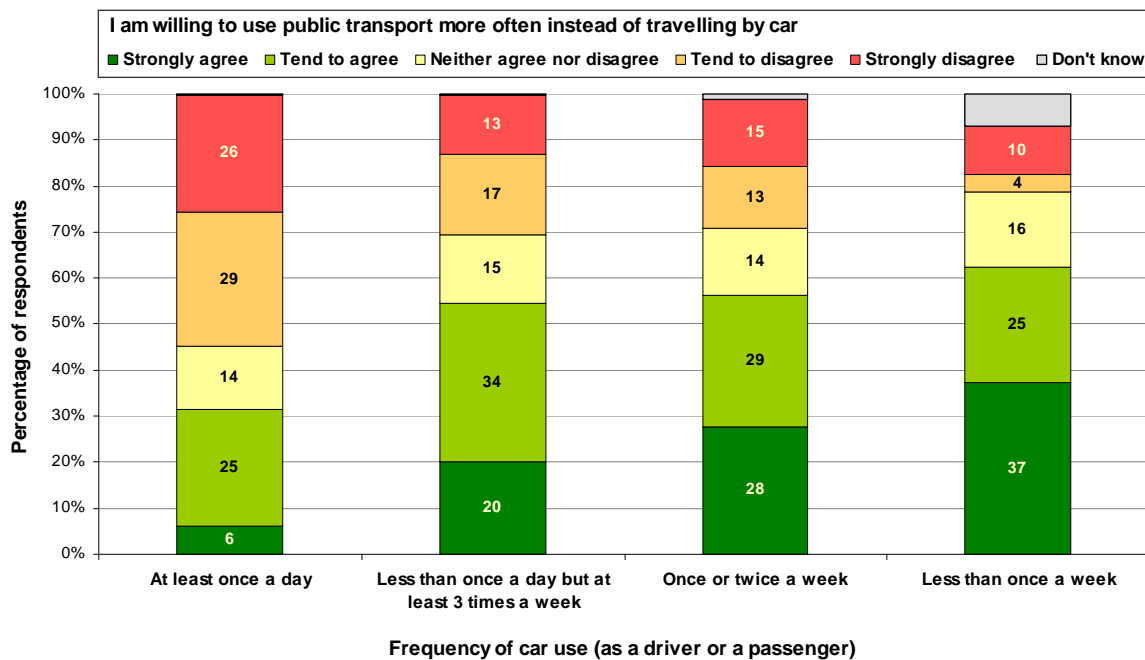
## Willingness to switch to using public transport more often

2.10 Over a third (35%) of respondents used public transport at least once a week, while 23% used it less than once a year or never (see table [att0213](#)).

2.11 In 2011, 44% of respondents said they were **willing to use public transport more often instead of travelling by car**, while 40% were unwilling to do so (see table [att0214](#)).

- Those who travelled by car more frequently (who also tended to travel by public transport less frequently) were less likely to be willing to switch to using public transport more as shown in figure 2.4 below. Among those who travelled by car at least once a day (half of adults) only 31% were willing to switch to using public transport more often compared to 58% for those who travelled by car less often.
- Graduates were significantly more likely to be willing to switch to using public transport more (57% compared to 41%).

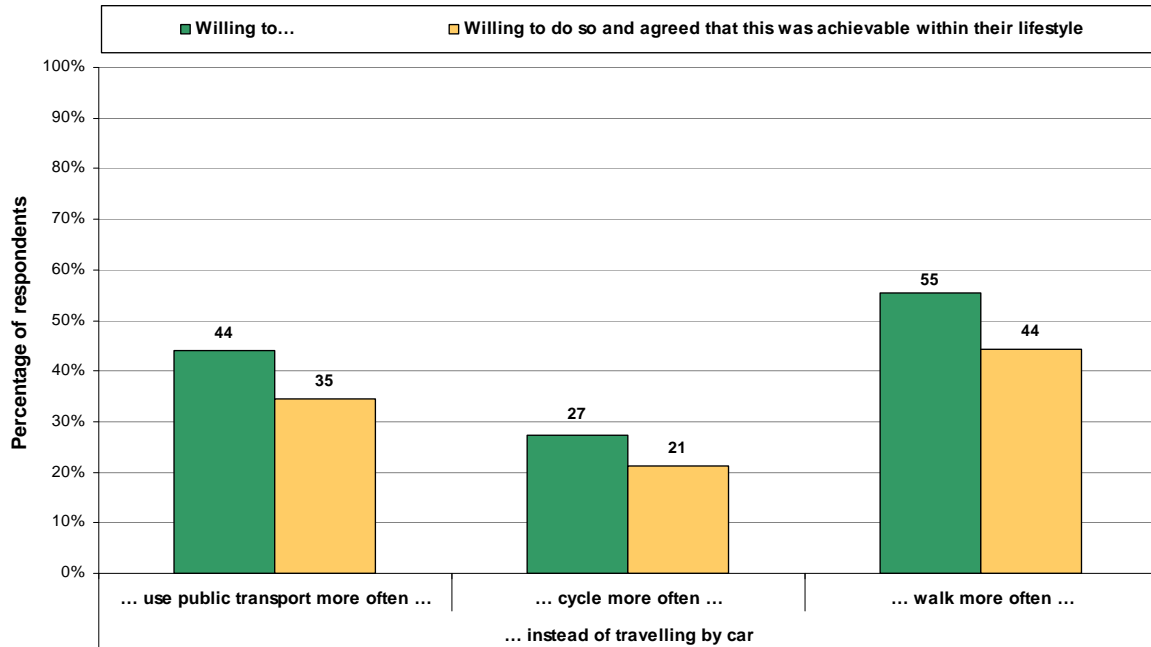
**Figure 2.4** Willingness to use public transport more often instead of travelling by car, by frequency of car use



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.  
Base numbers: 552, 227, 156, 187.

2.12 As shown in figure 2.5, although 44% of respondents were willing to use public transport more often instead of travelling by car, only 35% of all respondents were both **willing to do so and agreed that this was achievable within their lifestyle** (also see table [att0215](#)).

**Figure 2.5** Willingness to use other modes more often instead of travelling by car



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.  
Base numbers: public transport = 1122; cycling = 1095; walking = 1109.

## Willingness to switch to walking or cycling more often

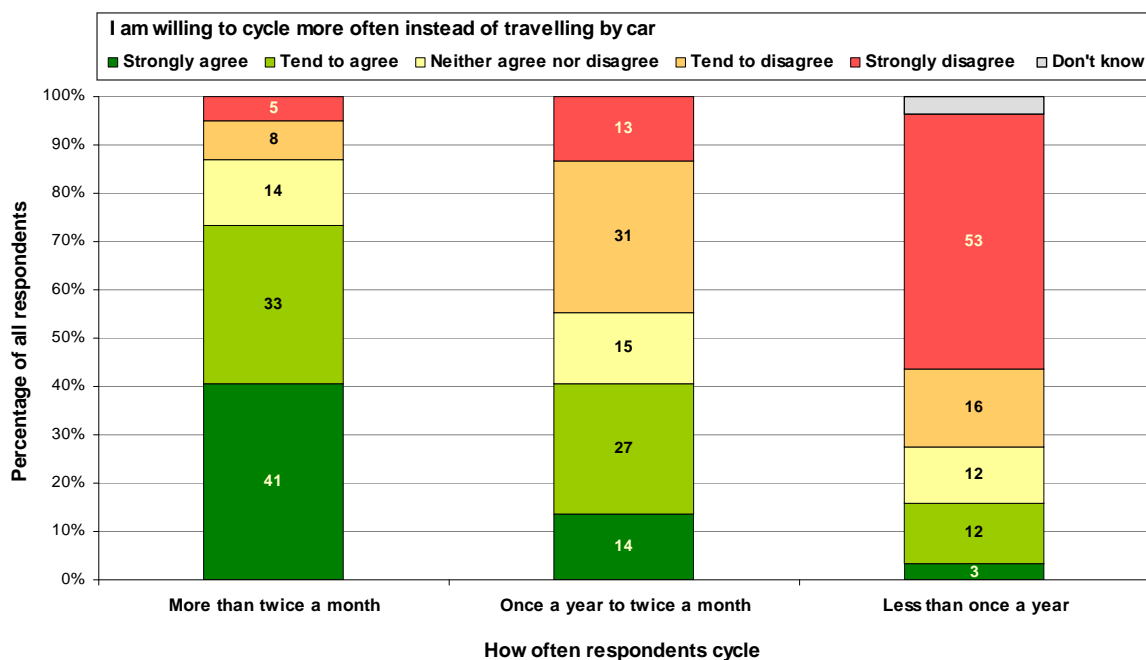
2.13 Looking at **how frequently respondents cycled**, only 14% of respondents cycled more than twice a month. The majority (72%) of respondents cycled less than once a year or never (see table [att0216](#)).

- Men tended to cycle more often than women; 20% of men cycled more than twice a month compared to 7% for women. Younger respondents tended to cycle more often, with 19% of under 44s cycling more than twice a month, falling to 5% for those aged 55 and over.
- Among graduates, 23% cycled more than twice a month, compared with 11% for non-graduates.

2.14 Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents said that they were **willing to cycle more often** instead of travelling by car. Reported willingness to **walk more often instead of travelling by car** was much higher at 55% (see tables [att0217](#) & [att0219](#)).

- Of those who cycled more than twice a month, almost three quarters (73%) were willing to cycle more often. This fell to 16% among those who cycled less than once a year or never (see figure 2.6 below).

**Figure 2.6** Willingness to cycle more often instead of travelling by car, by cycling frequency



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011  
Base numbers: 143, 145, 807.

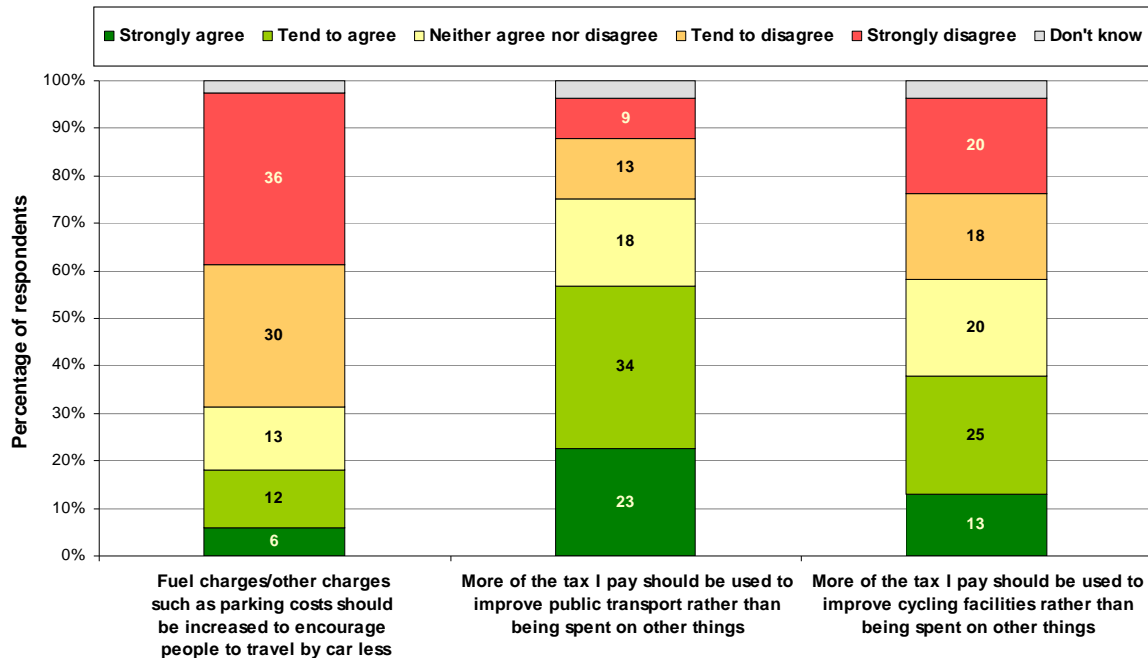
2.15 Although 55% of respondents reported that they were willing to walk more instead of travelling by car, those who were both **willing to do so and agreeing that this was achievable within their lifestyle** made up only 44% of all respondents. The equivalent proportions for cycling were 27% and 21% respectively (see figure 2.5 on page 15 and tables [att0218](#) & [att0220](#)).



## Support for government policy options to help reduce car use

Levels of support/opposition to suggested government policy options which may help to reduce car use are summarised in figure 2.7 below (also see tables [att0221](#), [att0222](#) and [att0223](#)).

**Figure 2.7 Attitudes to suggested government policy options to help reduce car use**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011

Base numbers: Statement 1 = 1122; Statement 2 = 1122; Statement 3 = 1106.

2.16 There was strong net opposition (48%) to **fuel tax or other charges being increased to encourage people to travel by car less**, with 18% of respondents supporting and 66% of respondents opposing.

- Opinions varied from 3% net support among those who were very willing to reduce their level of car use to 79% net opposition among those who were unwilling to reduce their level of car use.

2.17 There was strong net support (36%) for **more tax being spent on improving public transport** rather than being spent on other things, with 57% supporting and 21% opposing.

- Net support for more government spending on public transport was maintained among those with little or no concern about climate change (11%), those who did not use public transport often (13% for those who used it less than once a year) and those who were very unwilling to use public transport more (4%).

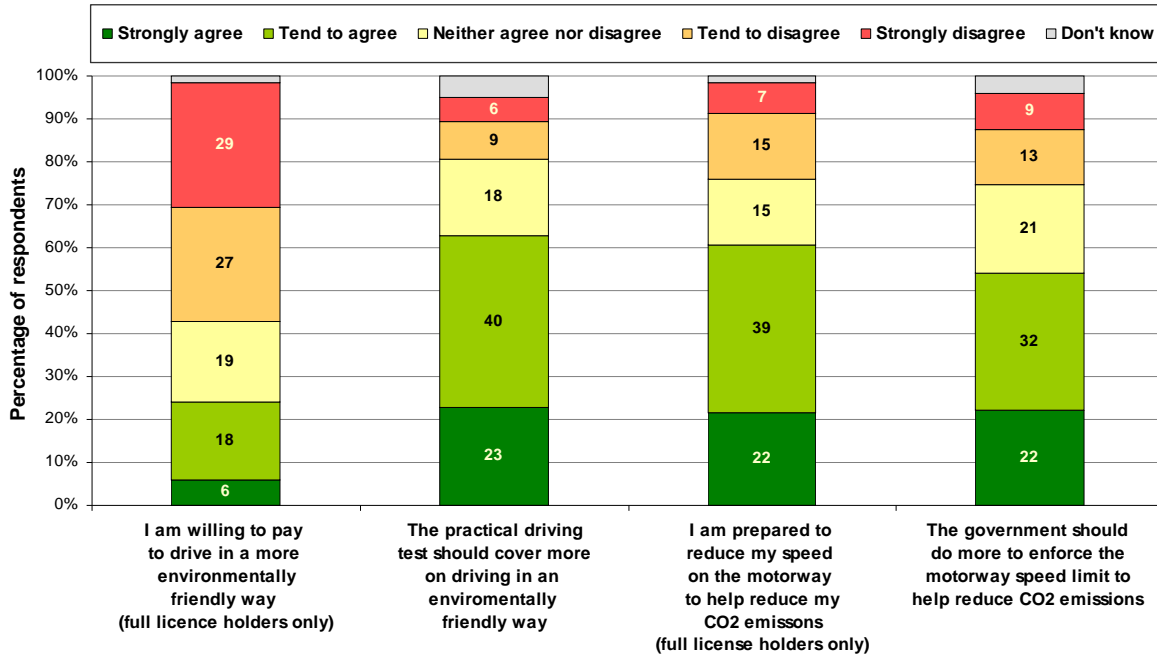
2.18 Opinions on **more tax being spent on cycling facilities** rather than on other things were divided (38% supporting and 38% opposing).

- Among those who were willing to cycle more often instead of travelling by car there was 50% net support. Among those who were unwilling there was 26% net opposition.

### 3 Environmentally friendly driving

This section looks at willingness to drive in a more environmentally friendly way and support for government policy options to encourage more environmentally friendly driving.

**Figure 3.1 Willingness to drive in a more environmentally friendly way and support for related policy options**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.

Base numbers: Statement 1 (full license holders) = 801; Statement 2 (all adults) = 1121; Statement 3 (full license holders) = 801; Statement 4 (all adults) = 1122.

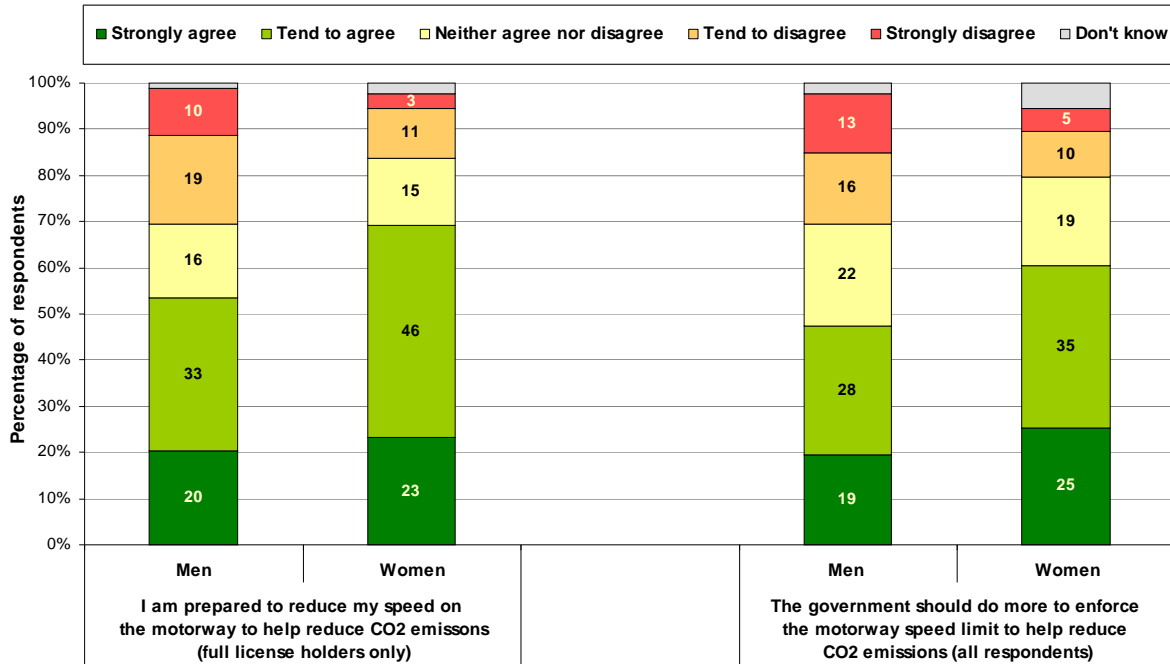
#### Willingness to drive in a more environmentally friendly way

3.1 In 2011, 24% of drivers (full driving license holders) said that they were **willing to pay to learn to drive in a more environmentally friendly way**, while 56% of drivers were unwilling to do so (see figure 3.1 and table [att0224](#)).

3.2 The proportion of drivers reporting that they were **willing to reduce their speed on the motorway to help reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** was 61%, while 22% of drivers were unwilling to do so (see figure 3.1 and table [att0225](#)).

- Female drivers were significantly more likely (69%) to be willing to reduce their motorway speed than male drivers (53%) (see figure 3.2 on page 19).
- Among those who were at least fairly concerned about climate change, 70% were willing to reduce their motorway speed, compared to 42% for those with little or no concern about climate change.

**Figure 3.2 Attitudes to reducing motorway speed to help reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, by gender**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.

Base numbers: Statement 1 (full license holders) – men = 440; women = 361

Statement 2 (all adults) – men = 536; women = 586.

### Support for government policy options to encourage more environmentally friendly driving

3.3 When asked if they agreed that **the practical part of the driving test should cover more about driving in an environmentally friendly way**, 63% of respondents agreed while 15% disagreed (see figure 3.1 and table [att0226](#)).

3.4 Respondents were also asked whether or not they agreed that **the government should do more to enforce the motorway speed limit to help reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**; 54% agreed while 21% of respondents disagreed (see figure 3.1 and table [att0227](#)).

- There was some difference of opinion on the issue between men and women. Among women 60% agreed, while only 47% of men agreed (see figure 3.2 above).
- Among those who were at least fairly concerned about climate change, 64% agreed with more enforcement of the motorway speed to help reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, compared to 36% for those with little or no concern about climate change.

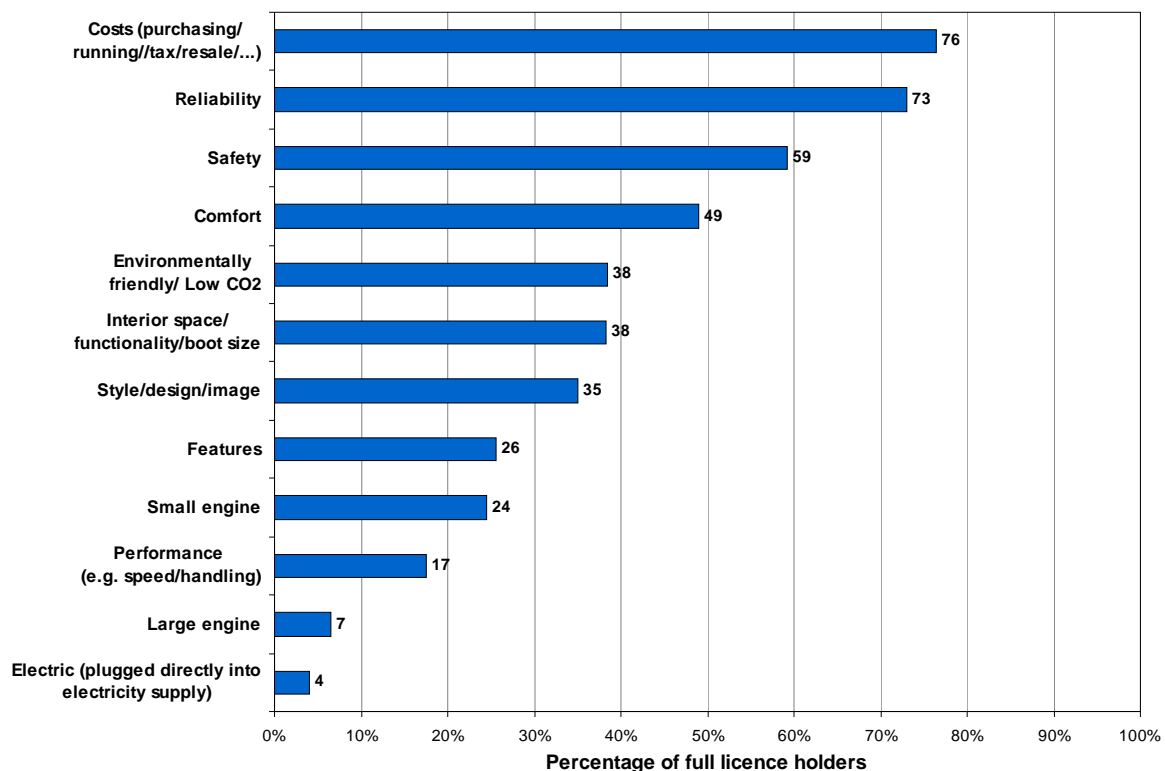
## 4 Vehicle purchasing

This section looks at the factors that drivers consider when purchasing cars or vans, attitudes to buying cars with lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and attitudes towards electric cars.

### Factors considered important when buying a car

- 4.1 Drivers were asked what factors were **important to them when buying a car/van**. They were asked to pick responses from a list and also had the opportunity to report anything not included on the list. The most common responses are shown in figure 4.1 below (also see table [att0228](#)). The things that were important to most drivers were costs (76%), reliability (73%) and safety (59%).

Figure 4.1 Important factors when buying a car/van



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.

This chart is based on full licence holders.

Respondents could choose more than one response and provide their own response not included in the list.

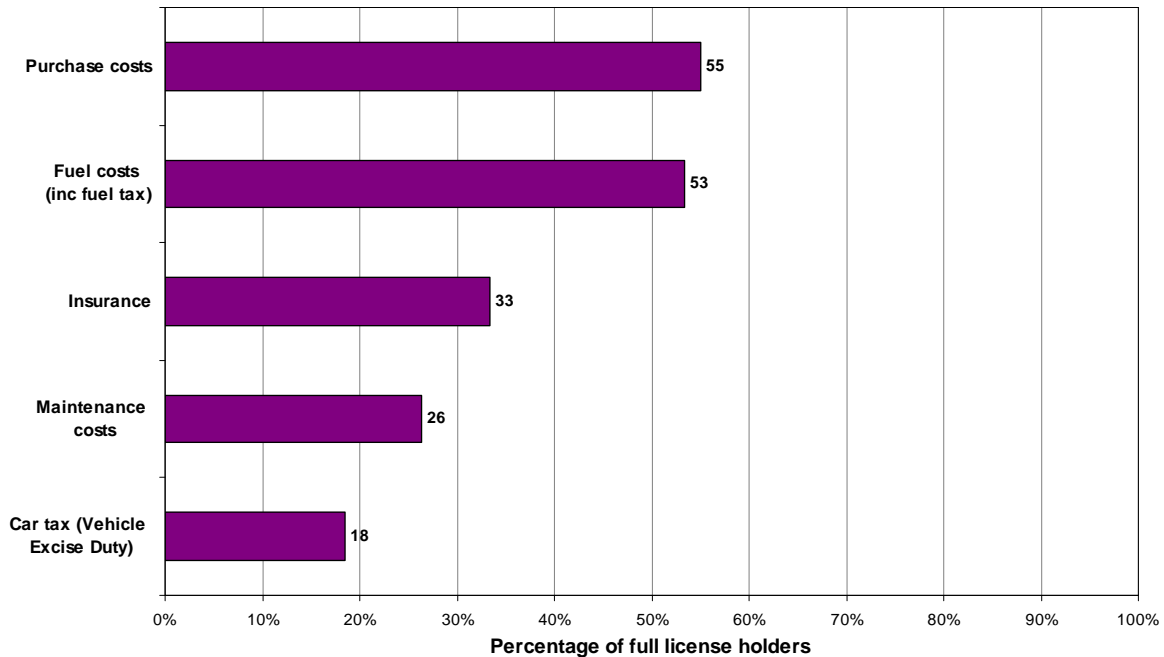
Other less common responses, not included in the chart, include: 'don't know' and 'car must be automatic'.

Base number: 803.

- 4.2 Four out of ten (38%) drivers considered environmentally friendliness important when buying a car. A quarter (24%) of drivers considered having a small engine important, while only 7% of drivers considered having a large engine important when buying a car/van.

4.3 Drivers who mentioned costs as one of the things they considered important to them when buying a car/van were prompted with a list of costs and asked to pick up to three they would think about the most. The most common responses are shown as a proportion of all drivers in figure 4.2 below. In 2011, 55% of drivers considered purchasing costs important. 53% of drivers considered fuel costs important up significantly from 45% in 2010 (also see table [att0229](#)).

**Figure 4.2** Costs considered important when buying a car/van



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.

This chart is based on full licence holders.

Respondents who said that costs were an important factor when buying a car/van were asked to pick up to three costs.

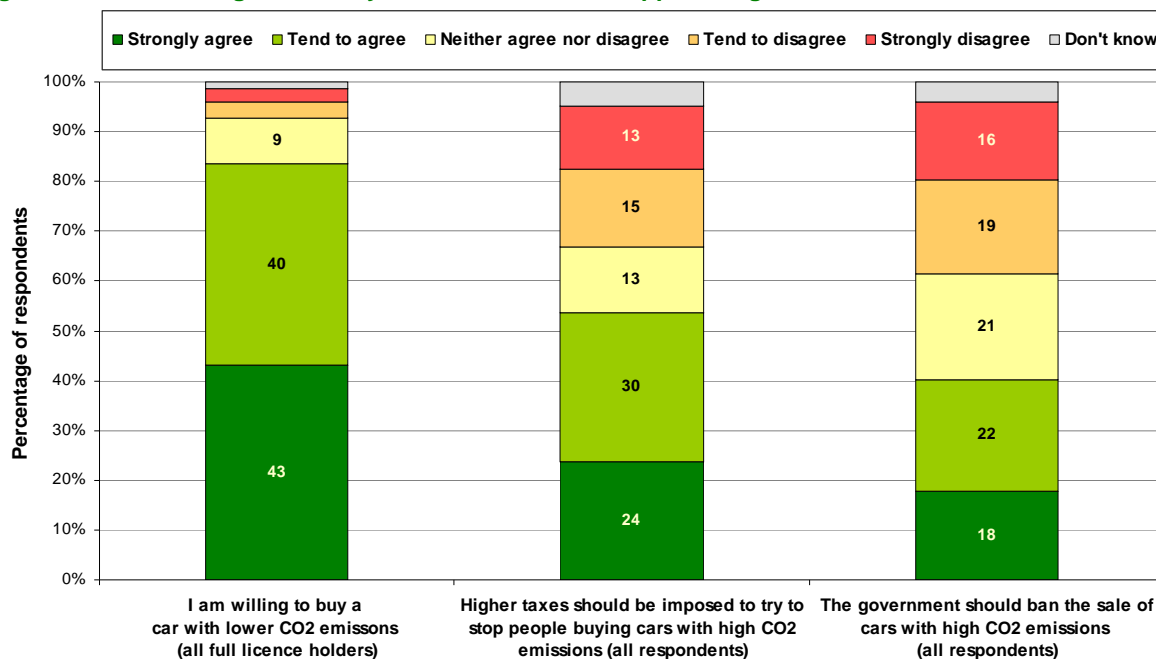
The results are shown as a percentage of all full licence holders (including those who did not pick costs as an important factor when buying a car/van).

Base number: 803.

## Attitudes to purchasing cars with lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

- 4.4 Over four out of five (84%) drivers (full license holders) were **willing to buy a car with lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** (see figure 4.3 and table [att0230](#)). The proportion of drivers who were willing was high even among those who had little or no concern about climate change (68%).
- 4.5 Among drivers who picked fuel costs as an important factor when buying a car or van, 89% were willing to buy a car with lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, significantly higher than for all other drivers (79%). This suggests some awareness among drivers of a link between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and fuel economy.
- 4.6 While willingness to buy lower CO<sub>2</sub> cars was generally high, opinions on **government intervention to discourage/stop the buying of high CO<sub>2</sub> emission cars** were much more divided (see figure 4.3 and tables [att0231](#) & [att0232](#)).
- Just over half (54%) of respondents supported higher taxes to try to stop people buying cars with high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, while 28% of respondents were opposed to this measure.
  - Support for a ban on the sale of cars with high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions was 40%, with 34% of respondents were opposed to a ban.

**Figure 4.3** Willingness to buy lower CO<sub>2</sub> cars and support for government intervention



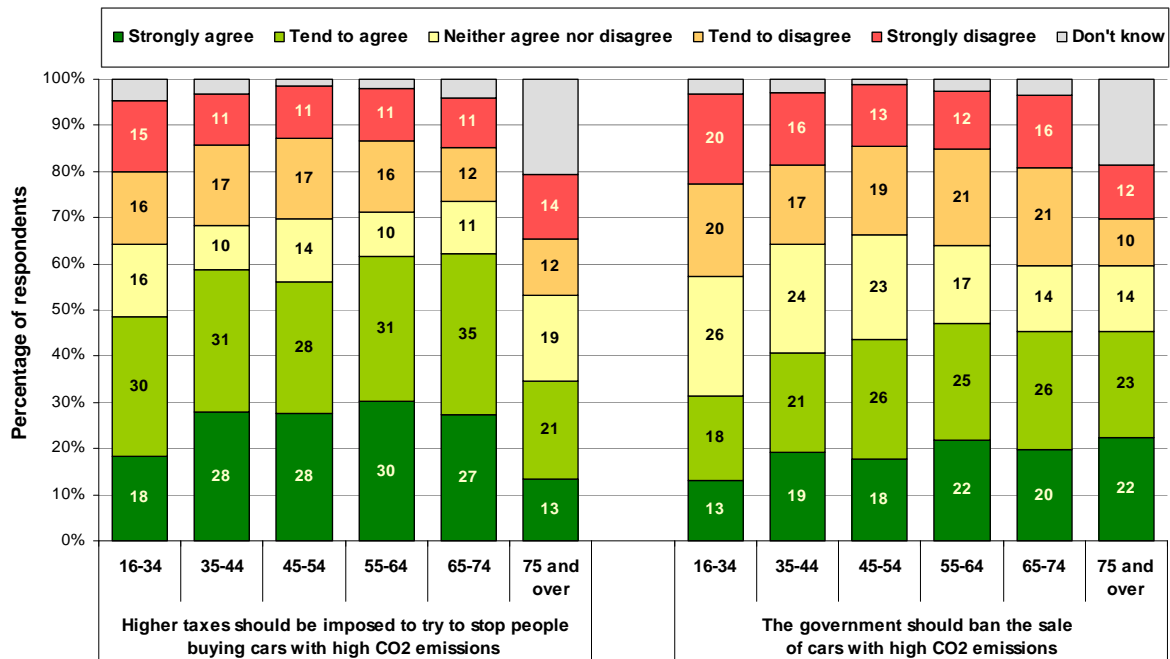
Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.

Base numbers: Statement 1 (full license holders) = 803; Statement 2 (all adults) = 1121; Statement 3 (all adults) = 1122.

4.7 There was less support for government intervention among younger respondents (see figure 4.4 below):

- Just under half (48%) of 16-34 year olds supported higher taxes to stop people from buying higher CO<sub>2</sub> cars compared with 59% among 35-64 year olds.
- Only 31% of 16-34 years olds supported an outright ban on high CO<sub>2</sub> emitting cars, compared with 44% among the 35-64 year olds.

**Figure 4.4 Support for government intervention to discourage/stop the purchasing of high CO<sub>2</sub> cars by age group**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.

Base numbers: Statement 1 – 220, 208, 196, 201, 164, 132; Statement 2 – 221, 208, 196, 201, 164, 132.

## Attitudes to electric cars

In the following, 'electric' refers to cars/vans which are plugged directly into the electricity supply.

4.8 Drivers were asked about their **level of knowledge about electric cars**. Just under half of drivers reported having at least a little knowledge (2% of drivers said they knew a lot, 10% a fair amount and 36% a little), 25% knew hardly anything about electric cars and 27% knew nothing about electric cars (see table [att0233](#)).

- There was a significant difference in the reported levels of knowledge between male and female drivers. 58% of male drivers reported that they had at least a little knowledge about electric cars compared with 37% for female drivers.
- Higher earners were more likely to feel that they knew at least a little about electric cars: 60% of those earning £26,000 or more reported at least a little knowledge about electric cars, falling significantly to 37% among those earning less than £16,640.

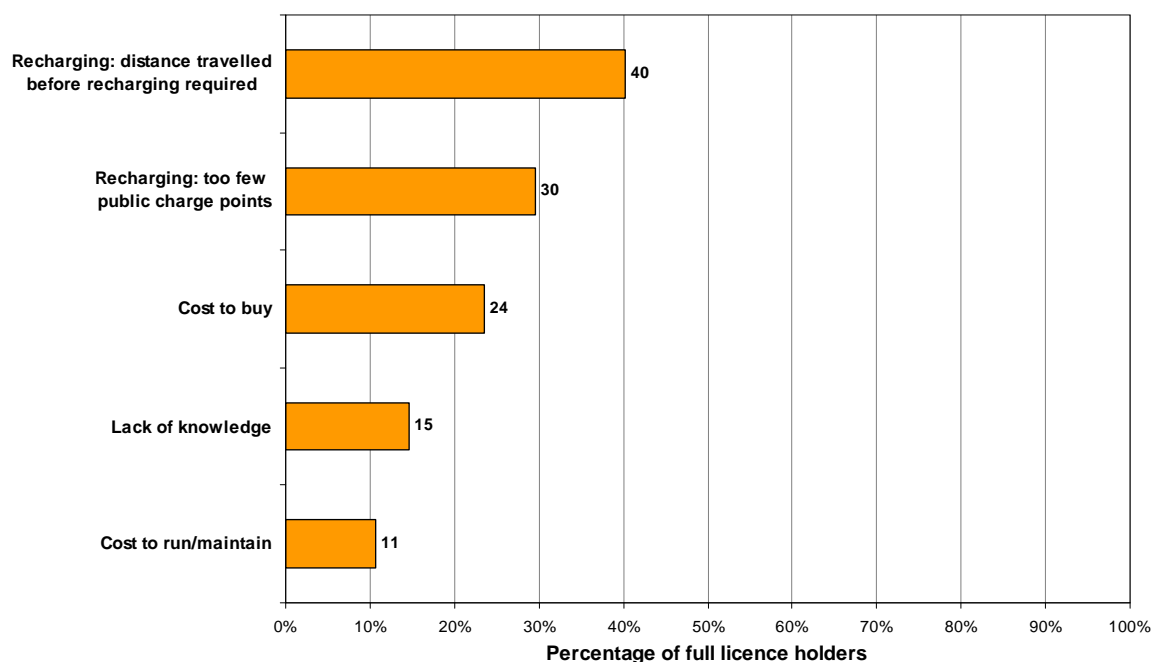
Drivers who had at least heard of electric vehicles before the interview (99% of drivers) were asked:

- a. What if anything would put them off buying an electric car/van (table [att0234](#)).
- b. Next time they bought a car/van what if anything would encourage them to buy an electric car/van (table [att0235](#)).

Drivers were not prompted with a list of possible responses and were not limited in the number of responses they could give.

4.9 The main things drivers said would **discourage them from buying an electric car/van** (summarised in figure 4.5), centred around *recharging*, *costs* and *lack of knowledge about electric cars*.

**Figure 4.5 The main perceived barriers to purchasing electric car/vans**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.

This is based on full license holders who had heard of electric cars prior to being surveyed (99% of full licence holders). Respondents could choose more than one response and were not prompted with a list of possible responses.

Base numbers: 796.

4.10 Among female drivers, 20% mentioned lack of knowledge as a barrier to buying an electric car/van, double the proportion for men (10%). Men were significantly more likely to see the distance before recharging required as a barrier (47% compared to 31% for women).

4.11 When asked what would **encourage them to buy an electric vehicle**, next time they bought a car/van, 23% of drivers said that nothing would encourage them to buy an electric car/van in 2011, up from 16% in 2010. The other most common responses centred around costs: cost to run/maintain (24%), subsidies/tax reduction/grants (23%), cost to buy (20%).

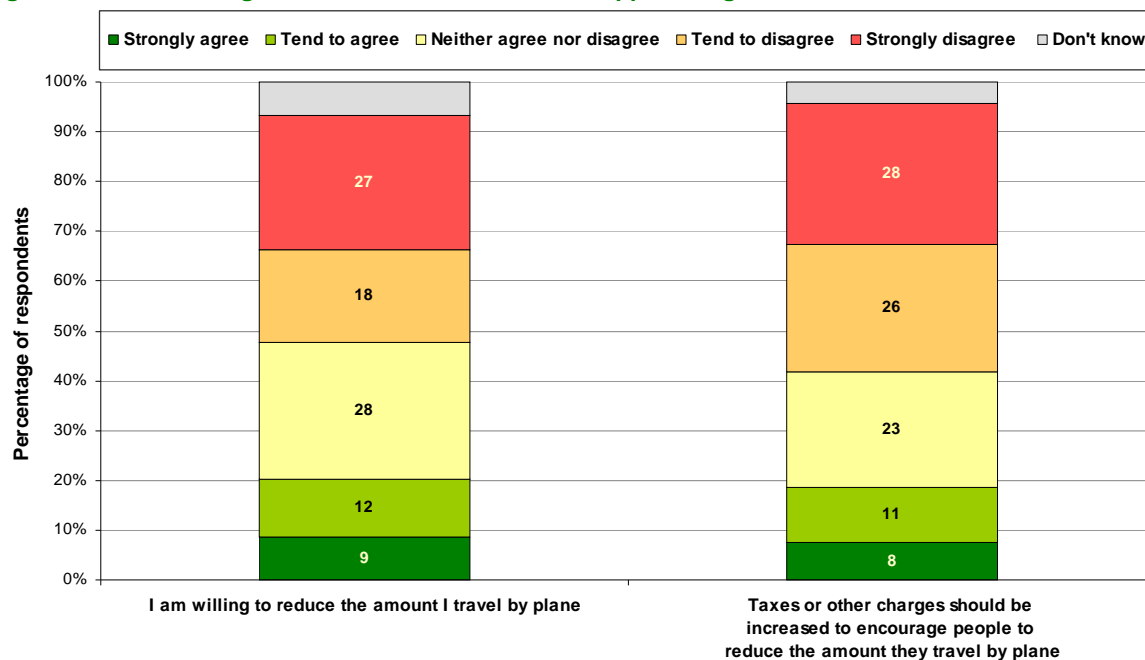
4.12 Only 13% of graduates said that nothing would encourage them to buy an electric car/van, compared with 26% for other respondents. A fifth (21%) of graduates mentioned environmental benefits as an incentive to buying an electric car compared to only 11% for other drivers.



## 5 The potential for reducing air travel

- 5.1 Looking at **how frequently respondents travelled by plane** in 2011, 12% of respondents flew more than twice a year, with 39% flying once or twice a year and 49% flying less than once a year (see table [att0236](#)).
- 5.2 How frequently respondents travelled by plane appeared to be unrelated to how concerned they were about climate change, but appeared to be closely linked to how much they earned. Those on higher incomes tended to fly more often; 74% of those earning £26,000 or more flew at least once a year, falling to 36% among those with incomes less than £10,400.

**Figure 5.1 Willingness to reduce air travel and support for government intervention**



Source: Opinions Survey August 2011.  
Base numbers: Statement 1 = 1094; Statement 2 = 1115.

- 5.3 In 2011, 20% of respondents said that they were willing to reduce the amount they travelled by plane while 46% of respondents were unwilling to do so (see figure 5.1 above and table [att0237](#)). Even among those who were very concerned about climate change only 28% were willing to reduce their air travel, while 40% were unwilling to do so.
- 5.4 There was net opposition (35%) to **increasing fuel tax or other charges to encourage people to travel by plane less**, with 19% of respondents supporting and 54% of respondents opposing (see figure 5.1 and table [att0238](#)).
- Even among those who were very concerned about climate change there was net opposition to this measure (18%).
  - Opinions varied from 41% net support among those who were very willing to reduce their air travel to 72% net opposition among those who were very unwilling to reduce their air travel.